

Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Workplace Health and Safety



Introduction

At Kootingal & District Preschool our Workplace Health and Safety policy is based on the belief that the wellbeing of people employed, or the people affected by our work (including children, parents, visitors, and volunteers) is a major priority and must be considered during all work performed on our behalf.

Everyone has a right to be safe at work. Our service is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for educators, staff, children, families and visitors. We ensure that educators and staff are aware of and meet their legal and ethical responsibilities as clearly documented in current National Regulations and Work Health and Safety laws.

Our Work, Health and Safety policy, procedures and practices ensure that management fulfils its responsibility to provide a safe workplace, without any negative impact on the health and wellbeing of employees; employees meet their health and safety obligations and are safe in the workplace; and the work environment supports quality early education and care.

Goals – What are we going to do?

Kootingal & District Preschool aims to remove or reduce the risk to health, safety and welfare of all employees, visitors and families. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Approved Provider and its employees have the duty to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and where risk to health is kept as low as reasonably practicable.

Kootingal and District Preschool aims to:

- Achieve an accident-free workplace
- Make health and safety an integral part of the day
- Ensure health and safety is considered in all planning and work activities
- Involve employees in the decision-making process
- Provide a continuous program of education and learning
- Identify and control all potential hazards
- Provide effective injury management and rehabilitation to all employees.

Our objective is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children, families, educators, and visitors within the service adhering to moral and legal obligations outlined in Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws. We aim to go beyond compliance with all relevant legislation and work towards best practice to ensure a safe work environment. Our service is committed to continuous improvement in all areas of workplace health, safety, and wellbeing.

Strategies – To achieve our goals

Kootingal and District Preschool Workplace Health and Safety policy will be carried out through a Workplace Health and Safety program which includes:

- Identification and control of hazards

- Investigation and reporting all accidents and dangerous incidents
- Participation and consultation with employees on safety matters
- Provision of first aid and emergency procedures
- Provision of information and training necessary for safety.

We believe that the provision of a safe working and learning environment for children, families, staff, and visitors are an integral and essential responsibility during the service operation. Work Health and Safety regulations require the approved provider to eliminate risks in the workplace or if that is not reasonably practicable, minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Our service has a duty to consult with staff, visitors and families about work health and safety requirements and develop comprehensive policies and procedures to manage physical and psychosocial risks and hazards appropriately and effectively. All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

Workers Compensation Obligations

Approved providers will ensure the following to facilitate compliance of WH&S Laws and regulations relating to Workers Compensation obligations:

1. Hold workers compensation insurance
2. Provide information relating to how employees can make a claim. This may include displaying a poster relating to injuries at work – check your state or territory WorkSafe website for specific requirements
 - NSW If you get injured at work poster
3. Provide information to employees regarding a return-to-work program – check your state or territory WorkSafe website for specific requirements
 - NSW Return to work program
4. Ensure staff incident reports are completed for all near-miss injuries or injuries, complete an injury register to record near-miss injuries and injuries.
5. Ensure staff injuries are reported to workers compensation insurer and state/territory WorkSafe within 48 hours. See each state or territory for information about injuries or serious incidents which are reportable to WorkSafe
 - SafeWork NSW 13 10 50
6. Support the employee with the following
 - Assist with Doctor appointment and certificate of capacity
 - Identify suitable duties based on certificate of capacity
 - Consider modification of existing duties
 - Consider modify of the workplace
7. Assist with participation of workers injury management plan upon return to work in consultation with insurer and medical practitioner, including providing suitable work conditions and alternative suitable employment if pre-injury role is unsuitable.

Hazard Reduction

Educators and staff have responsibilities to take a risk management approach to all activities and plan for the safety of themselves and children. This may include:

- Always work with safety in mind
- Be aware of any hazards and report them immediately

- Keep hallways and doors completely clear as an object could become a hazard in an emergency evacuation situation
- Using resources appropriately
- Open doors slowly
- Do not stand on furniture (chairs or tables)
- Walk, not run within the service (particularly up and down stairs)
- Adhere to sun protection guidelines
- Ensure personal safety by wearing PPE, implementing hand hygiene procedures
- Follow behaviour guidance plans to ensure personal safety and that of other children

Cleaning

Educators and staff must:

- Adhere to the cleaning schedules and procedures within the Service including hand washing, use of gloves, colour coded mops/cloths
- Follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning products and chemicals (see Safety Data Sheets- SDS)
- Ensure a register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment is used at the service. The register should include where they are stored, their use, any risks, first aid instructions and the current SDS.
- Chemicals are never mixed together
- Chemicals and cleaning products are stored in original containers provided by the manufacturer
- All items are clearly labelled
- Wash hands immediately if any chemical is spilled
- In the event of a chemical spill, isolate the area and advise the Nominated Supervisor
- Wash hands thoroughly after using any chemical or disinfectant
- Ensure containers are disposed of correctly following local council guidelines and not reused under any circumstances
- Seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhalation, skin or eye exposure has occurred.
- *Poisons Information Line 13 11 26 or call an Ambulance on 000*
- Ensure emergency, medical and first aid procedures are carried out according to service policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor	➤ Providing all employees with a safe and healthy work and learning environment so far as reasonably practicable ➤ Ensuring the health and safety of children in attendance at the Service so far as reasonably practicable ➤ Ensuring the health and safety of visitors, including contract workers and volunteers, whilst at the service so far as reasonably practicable ➤ Providing and maintaining an environment free of risks or hazards to health and safety so far as reasonably practicable ➤ Providing and maintaining an environment that is tobacco, alcohol and drug free

- Ensuring the provision of adequate facilities to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety including access to adult toilets, provision of hand hygiene resources (soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitiser, paper towel) and personal protection equipment (PPE) (disposable gloves, masks, glasses)
- Ensuring all employees are aware of the risks of Cytomegalovirus (CMV) exposure during pregnancy and encourage female employees of childbearing age to speak with their health professional
- Implementing a proactive process of risk management facilitating continuous improvement
- The identification, assessment and management of psychological and psychosocial hazards through detailed risk assessments
- Ongoing consultation, collaboration and communication with all staff throughout the risk assessment process
- Implementing a strategic approach to health and safety by using measurable objectives to monitor performance
- Meaningful consultation with employees regarding work, health and safety issues
- Providing an effective and accessible safety management procedure for all employees to guide safe working and learning throughout the workplace
- Ensuring Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are provided for all hazardous chemicals used at the service
- Supporting and promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees
- Promoting dignity and respect within the service and taking action to prevent and respond to bullying in its workplace
- Providing staff with appropriate information, training, and guidance to facilitate a safe and productive work and learning environment
- Implementing a thorough induction and orientation program for new staff and employees
- Notifying the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any incident, situation or event that has occurred and presented imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and/or wellbeing of any person present at the Service or if an ambulance was called in response to the incident/situation (not as a precaution)
- Investigating and managing any incident or accident to prevent further reoccurrence
- Providing return to work programs to facilitate safe and sustainable return to work for employees
- Providing a program of continuous improvement through engaging with industry and new technology and reviewing and updating policies and procedures
- Implementing safety management systems / procedures
- Ensuring a clear process is in place regarding raising complaints and grievances related to bullying, discrimination and harassment
- Ensuring complaints or grievances are treated seriously and immediate action is taken in a timely manner
- Keep up to date about current health risks and implement risk minimisation measures to reduce the risk of transmission of viruses such as coronavirus (COVID-19)

	➤ Maintain accurate records of all WHS issues and maintenance.
Early Childhood Educators	Educators and other staff must ensure: ➤ The health and safety of children, families and visitors of the service is paramount ➤ Policies and procedures are being followed and adhered to at all times ➤ That they observe, implement and fulfil the responsibilities under the current Work Health and Safety Act and National Regulations ➤ They participate in the review of WHS policies ➤ They take practical steps and responsibility for their own health and safety and of others affected by their actions at work ➤ Work, health, and safety audits are conducted frequently to ensure the Service is maintaining a safe environment for children, families, staff and visitors ➤ Appropriate resources and processes are in place to identify hazards, eliminate or minimise risks and achieve work health and safety compliance ➤ They know the location of fire extinguishers, blankets or other safety devices and know how to use them ➤ Identified risks are assessed and controlled ➤ That any potential and actual hazards in the workplace are reported to the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) ➤ Management and/or the HSR is notified of any incidents and accidents in the workplace as soon as practicable ➤ Workplace incidents are reported and investigated to ascertain the circumstances of the incident or accident and appropriate action is taken to prevent further incidents from occurring ➤ Correct record keeping procedures for incidents and accidents in the WHS Reporting folder are followed ➤ Compliance with any reasonable instruction or lawful direction, including wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) supplied by the employer as required ➤ Areas identified for improvement are included in the Self-Assessment Portal ➤ They participate in training and consultation with the support of management ➤ They follow the correct manual handling procedures ➤ That work areas are safe, and they will help reduce accidents to themselves and others ➤ All safety checklists are implemented as required on a regular basis ➤ Children's equipment is regularly checked for safety ➤ That children are supervised at all times ➤ All dangerous chemicals are stored appropriately ➤ Children are kept out of kitchen areas ➤ All power points have safety plugs ➤ No hot drinks are around children ➤ Gates are closed and locked after entry/exit ➤ All spills are cleaned up immediately (to prevent slipping), following the correct cleaning procedure

	➤ Reports and/or concerns about work health and safety are reviewed and responded to ➤ Current work health and safety knowledge is maintained
Families/visitors	➤ Take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst visiting the service; including the safety and health of their own children not enrolled in the service ➤ Report any health and safety issues to management ➤ Participate in consultation in WHS issues affecting them ➤ Take reasonable care to ensure they don't affect the health and safety of other people, including keeping children away from the service when they are unwell. ➤ Comply to service policies and procedures in relation to WHS including actions to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases or illnesses such as physical distancing (if recommended by Australian Government Department of Health) personal hygiene practices and exclusion if children and visitors if unwell ➤ Comply to Service policies related to the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs at all times ➤ Provide Working with Children Check details as required (visitors/contractors) ➤ Ensure they are never left alone with children.

In addition:

Back injury will be minimised by:

- Correct lifting technique
- Providing adult height utilities and equipment
- Providing small chairs with good back support, instead of squatting or bending for interactions with children
- Have shelving, filing cabinets and storage cabinets at a suitable height to avoid stretching to reach them
- When possible encourage educators to kneel rather than bending to avoid back problems
- Encourage staff to be careful when lifting and encourage comfortable posture
- Minimize the need to reach above shoulder height and use a step ladder
- Encourage educators to share the load if equipment is heavy
- Use and provide equipment that can be moved around safely and easily
- Encourage educators to lift furniture with at least two people.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Workplace Health and Safety policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

Kootingal and District preschool Inc. will have a safe and healthy work environment for educators, visitors, and families.

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy yearly.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Links to other policies:

Administration of First Aid

Medication Administration

Animals in the Environment

Harassment-free Workplace

Child Protection

Social Media

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Dealing with Infectious Diseases

Delivery and Collection of Children

Emergency and Evacuation

Excursion/Preschool Programs and Events

Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma

Dealing with Medical Conditions

Toileting and Nappy Change

Nutrition

Pregnancy in Early Childhood

Safe Sleep, Rest and Relaxation

Supervision

Water Safety

Smoke, Drug and Alcohol Free Environment

Related Legislation:

NQS

Quality Area 2		Children's health and safety
Standard	2.1	Health
Element	2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort
Element	2.1.2	Health practices and procedures
Element	2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle
Standard	2.2	Safety
Element	2.2.1	Supervision

Element	2.2.2	Incident and emergency management
Element	2.2.3	Child protection
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National Law

Section	168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety
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National Regulations

Reg	82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
Reg	83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
Reg	168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety
Reg	171	Policies to be kept available

Sources:

- NSW Work cover
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Guide to the National Quality Framework.
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2012). PSC- National Alliance How to- Work health and safety in education and care services.
- Australian Government Department of Education. Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. V2.0, 2022
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012) (updated June 2013). Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.
- NSW Government. Safe Work. Early childhood education and care. (2021)
- Pregnancy, Birth and Baby. Cytomegalovirus (CMV) during pregnancy.
- Safe Work Australia
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth).
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017

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